

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

— 50TH ANNIVERSARY —

Report of the First Ladies Voyage

Monday, April 22, 2002

The day began immediately upon stepping onboard. I had a meeting with the Governor's Security Detail made up of seven Alaska State Troopers of various talents. Five of them remained in Ketchikan to stay with the First Ladies as they arrived in Ketchikan during the course of the day. I received a very involved itinerary for the First Ladies. Upon departure from Ketchikan to Prince Rupert, Alaska State Troopers L. Beaudoeuf, and Jacques Klotz rode with us to Prince Rupert. They are bomb technicians. They scoped out the ship all day long. We held a meeting about bomb threats and their detection, informing us of what we are to do and whom we are to call. They also discussed with us the character of terrorists. We considered this both a fire drill and ISM drill #14 – Bomb Threat.

While loading at Rupert, a boarding passenger showed up without any photo ID, but only a birth certificate. I denied him passage. Trooper Beaudoeuf looked relieved when I did that. It is amazing how many people travel around without a photo ID in Alaska. The Troopers observed each car and passenger as they boarded, and again scoped out the entire vessel on the return trip to Ketchikan. Tonight upon arrival, I am supposed to greet the First Ladies and speak to them about the ship and safety. Captain Capacci will be with me, or rather, I will be with Captain Capacci. There are fourteen First Ladies. As captain, I am invited to dinner with them tomorrow night. There will also be an official bridge tour and photo session. The group goes ashore in Petersburg for lengthy tours, Peril Strait to Sitka is transited in the evening, and then more tours upon arrival in Auke Bay. In addition to the security detail, there are staff members, and guest speakers, including Alaska



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— 50TH ANNIVERSARY —

Governor Knowle's personal chef. Tomorrow promises to be a busy day with a daylight passage through Wrangell Narrows. All during the day, working in the background, the entire crew and the passenger manifests were "checked" by the FBI.

We arrived a little late in Ketchikan, and the First Ladies, Staff, and Security Detail boarded

Alaska first lady Susan Knowles, left, and Arkansas first lady Janet Huckabee admire a totem pole Monday afternoon in Saxman. Knowles and Huckabee were with a group of about 15 governors' spouses visiting the Ketchikan area on their way to a National Governors Association annual seminar. The group will travel aboard the Alaska Marine Highway System ferry Kennicott, visiting Petersburg, Wrangell, Sitka and Juneau. In Ketchikan, they took a harbor tour, visited Saxman and dined at the Cape Fox Lodge before departing on the ferry.

Staff photo by Hall Anderson



immediately. Captain Capacci, I, and our Chief Steward, Virgil Ward, welcomed them onboard in the Bar. I gave a little safety lesson on how to walk around a ship without tripping. I received a question about our lifeboats, and another asked if I referred to the ship in the "feminine". As to the

latter question, I answered, "Absolutely", and they liked to hear that. Some of the First Ladies came from the East Coast. They were suffering from jet lag so our welcoming session was short and all found their staterooms and went to bed.

Onboard are the following First Ladies:

Susan Knowles, Alaska,

Janet Huckabee, Arkansas

Frances Owens, Colorado

Patricia Kempthorne, Idaho

Judy O'Bannon, Indiana

Christie Vilsack, Iowa

Michelle Engler, Michigan

Lori Hauser Holden, Missouri

Dee Johnson, New Mexico

Marilyn J. Almond, Rhode Island

Martha Sundquist, Tennessee

Lisa Collis, Virginia

Mona Lee Locke, Washington

Sherri Geringer, Wyoming.



ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

— 50TH ANNIVERSARY —



Captain Hopkins - Thanks for a great voyage aboard the M/V Kennecott for our visiting first ladies. Susan M. Knowles

The staff included guest speakers, Governor Knowle's personal chef and waiter, Trooper SWAT team detail, Trooper Bomb Detachment, Trooper K-9 with Belgian dog.

The guest speakers were:

Nan Elliot, Writer and Filmmaker, "The Magic of Alaska.

Mr. Timothy A. Slavin, Delaware Public Archives, "Preserving Your Legacy".

Jan Straley of Sitka, Author and Expert on Humpback Whales of Alaska, "Following the Whales into Fact and Fiction",

John Straley, Award Winning Mystery Writer, "Celebration of Noted Alaskans".

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

The next morning, Wrangell was too early for anyone to be up, but we entered Wrangell Narrows on schedule at 0830. The First Ladies were having breakfast while transiting the narrows and then a slide show in the theater. Most did not see the narrows, except Mrs. Locke and Mrs. Huckabee. They both wandered up to the port bridge wing, as did most of the Security Detail, and we invited them into the



ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

— 50TH ANNIVERSARY —

wheelhouse.

Janet Huckabee said, “We did not come all the way to Alaska to watch a slide show.” She and Mrs. Locke enjoyed a guided tour through Wrangell Narrows.

The port side of the bridge was the Security Detail’s Command Center. Three armed Coast Guard personnel were in an orange Avon raft escorting us through the narrows. One of them was Second Mate Mark Lundamo’s brother-in-law. The passage through the narrows was beautiful. Upon arrival in Petersburg, the First Ladies had a grand tour of Petersburg that lasted for three hours.



AMY WINTERS / Petersburg Pilot

Governor’s wives visit PSG

On Tuesday, governors’ spouses from fourteen states made a stop in Petersburg as part of a National Governors Association seminar hosted by Alaska first lady Susan Knowles. Here Knowles, Michelle Engler of Michigan, and Janet Huckabee of Arkansas become a little better acquainted with Valkyries Julie Spigelmyre and Emilie Sperl and Viking Don Spigelmyre. “I just thought it would be a wonderful experience to invite my friends and colleagues to come to Alaska and go on the ferry, because it’s really a unique experience.” The spouses heard Glorianne DeBoer and Heidi Lee speak, and were treated to Norwegian edibles and dances at the Sons of Norway Hall. They also briefly visited Claussen Memorial Museum and shopped downtown before once again boarding the *M/V Kennicott*. “We’re so happy we could come to Petersburg”, said Knowles.

At 1600, the First Ladies bridge tour and photo session with the Captain got underway. They were a lively and friendly group.

Political party affiliations did not matter. They were having a grand old time. They wanted photos, sea stories, and to steer the ship, especially Mrs. Huckabee. Mrs.

Huckabee proved to be quite a character, not afraid to try

anything.

She asked

very good questions and was there to learn anything and everything that came to her mind. Mrs. Locke seemed to understand a lot about ferry systems! As a part of their slide show, they were shown slides of Warm



ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

— 50TH ANNIVERSARY —

Springs Bay on Baranof Island. As luck would have it, we were coming up to the southern tip of Admiralty Island at Point Gardner when they came to the bridge. The weather cleared and the magnificent mountains of Baranof Island were clear to see. We crossed Chatham Strait and passed



Captain Hopkins - A moment of the NSA Spouses' Seminar aboard the M/V Kennicott. Susan M. Knowles

close by Baranof Hot Springs, waterfall and Warm Springs Bay.

The bridge tour was scheduled on their itinerary for only one hour. It lasted for nearly three hours.

During this time, we met the M/V *Matanuska* southbound to Petersburg from Sitka.

After that, I had to go directly to dinner in the Conference Room with the First Ladies at 1900, along with our General Manager, Captain Capacci. I sat with the First Lady of Idaho, Wyoming, and Rhode Island. We spoke of everything from ANWR (Alaska National Wildlife Refuge), the American Indian reservation system as compared to Alaska Native Corporations, radical environmentalism, war in Iraq, and the events of Sept. 11, 2001. I also found out from the First Lady of Tennessee that Mrs. Huckabee had run over and killed a Tennessee deer recently when driving through Tennessee to Washington, D.C. The dress code was informal. Mrs. Knowles was in jeans. She is a very kind and gracious host, the First Lady who christened the *Kennicott*.



ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

— 50TH ANNIVERSARY —

The menu for the evening was:

Entres: Alaska Seafood Brushettas on a bed of greens (mango crab, salmon and halibut lox tartare and scallops with pesto).

Rack of Lamb with a rhubarb-ginger chutney sauce, minted quinoa

Vegetable: Sauted asparagus

Desert: Individual icebox cakes (small)

Beverage: I had 7-UP and water, the Ladies had red wine.

We passed Broad Island at 2030 and that was my point to get up to the bridge to go through Peril Strait. Mrs. Knowles jumped up and clanged her wine glass with a spoon and I gave a small exit speech, letting them know how honored we on the *Kennicott* were to have them onboard our vessel. The passage through Peril Strait was light enough with a long twilight and near full moon for them to seem a lot of it. A Coast Guard helicopter over flew our ship as it patrolled the strait ahead of our route. Upon docking in Sitka, Mrs. Huckabee, along with her personal security guard, Wendy, came right out into the docking station with me. Mrs. Huckabee wanted to know all about docking the ship. We departed at 0200 in the morning to catch the slack water at Sergius Narrows, bound for Auke Bay. The First Ladies did not go ashore in Sitka at that hour of the day.

Wednesday, April 24, 2002

This was a short day. I slept from Povorotni Island to Portland Island - 0430 to 1000. Upon arrival at Auke Bay, we were escorted into Auke Bay by a Coast Guard patrol boat from Point Retreat to the dock. After docking, I said



ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

— 50TH ANNIVERSARY —

farewell to each First Lady as they filed past from the Purser's Foyer. This was the end of their voyage with us. They all had a very good time and were very happy, and gracious. Their voyage with us was a success. I might note that during the dinner, the conversation became so loud and animated, that I could hardly hear. They let their hair down and relaxed. They were a very warm and kind group of people. The Security Details also said their thanks for a wonderful voyage. Two

First ladies visit Alaska



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Fourteen first ladies attended a Governor's Spouses seminar in Southeast Alaska hosted by the National Governor's Association last week. The women travelled from Ketchikan to Juneau aboard the ferry Kennicott. The group arrived in Juneau on Wednesday and visited the Mendenhall Glacier. Shown in the front row, from left, are Frances Owens, Colorado; Mona Locke, Washington; Lori Holden, Missouri; and Janet Huckabee, Arkansas. In the back, from left, are Susan Knowles, Alaska; Judy O'Bannon, Indiana; Lisa Collis, Virginia; Martha Sundquist, Tennessee; Patricia Kempthorne, Idaho; Sherri Geringer, Wyoming; Michelle Engler, Michigan; Marilyn Almond, Rhode Island; and Dee Johnson, New Mexico. Not shown is Christie Vilsack of Iowa. She had left Alaska earlier.

First Ladies did not want to get off the ship so soon and let me know they would have liked to stay onboard much longer. On the way into Auke Bay, they had a spectacular view of the Mendenhall Glacier.

Once ashore, they continued with a busy schedule, flying over the Juneau Ice Field, visiting the Alaska State Museum, and dining with Governor Knowles and First Lady

Susan Knowles in the Governor's Mansion. This evening and tomorrow the group will fly to their various home states.

It was a once in a lifetime event for us, and myself in particular, to dine with fourteen First Ladies from the various states. I have worked at AMHS for over 25 years and have never experienced anything like this on a voyage.

Our crew did a superb job of serving these people and assuring that the First



ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

— 50TH ANNIVERSARY —

Ladies enjoyed a good voyage. I am very grateful to Chief Steward, Virgil Ward, and Chief Purser, John Ritterbach for their attention to detail and making sure that everything went smoothly. Equally, we thank our Engine Department for keeping all mechanical and electrical systems working in top condition.

It is time to depart already for the Haines and Skagway turnaround. Shipboard life is restored to normal. The weather remains good with partly sunny skies and early morning snow showers.

Written and Photographs Provided by Captain Bill Hopkins, AMHS Retired

May 8, 2002

Dear Captain Hopkins,

Thank you for helping to make the National Governors Association Spouses' Seminar a great success. The first ladies thoroughly enjoyed their travels on the M/V KENNICOTT. The Bridge Tour was a special treat. I'm afraid some might have stayed the entire trip to "assist" at the helm, if it had been allowed.

Many great ambassadors for Alaska returned to their home states to sing our praises, and I appreciate your assistance in making the trip so memorable.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Knowles
First Lady

